

Character Class

Divine Mind -- Cerebral Crusader

by *Skip Williams*



The divine mind from *Complete Psionic* offers a fusion of piety and psionic power. Despite the class's name, a divine mind is a fighting character whose physical prowess can defend the faithful or deal justice to those who transgress against it. A divine mind also has a slate of psionic powers directly inspired by the character's patron deity. This truly makes a divine mind an extension of the deity's will in the mortal world.

Assets

The divine mind class offers excellent combat power and psionic potential. Here's a look at what you get when you choose a divine mind.

- **Good Attack Bonus:** The divine mind's base attack bonus is +1 per level, which is the best in the game. When divine minds attack, they can expect to hit.
- **Good Weapon Selection:** Divine minds are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, which allows them to make full use of their excellent base attack bonuses.
- **Good Armor Class:** Divine minds also are proficient with all kinds of armor and shields (except tower shields), which allows them to build up fairly high Armor Classes. Divine minds often prove very difficult to damage in combat.
- **Good Hit Points:** The divine mind's 10-sided hit dice give the character an excellent hit point total. Divine minds can take damage just as well as they can dish it out.
- **Good Fortitude and Will Saves:** Divine minds use the best progression for Fortitude saves and Will saves (see Table 3 -- 1 in the *Player's Handbook*). Divine minds are physically tough and mentally resilient as well. In addition, most divine minds have fairly high Wisdom scores, because Wisdom governs their psionic abilities. A high Wisdom score makes a divine mind's Will saves even better.
- **Wild Talent:** At 1st level, a divine mind gains the Wild Talent feat (from the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*) as a bonus feat.
- **Psychic Aura:** A 1st-level divine mind continuously projects an aura of psionic power that aids both herself and allies nearby. A divine mind's psychic aura has a 5-foot radius at 1st level. For every two class levels thereafter, the aura's radius extends an extra 5 feet to a maximum of 50 feet at 19th level.

The divine mind can choose from three different auras -- attack, defense, and perception. An aura adds a numerical bonus to certain rolls and checks, as noted in the class description. At 1st level, the bonus is +1. For every five class levels the divine mind gains, the bonus increases by +1 to a maximum of +4 at 20th level. A divine mind's mantles (see below) add more auras she can employ.

At 10th level, a divine mind can have two auras active at once. At 20th level, the divine mind can have three auras active at once.

At 1st level, a divine mind can change the aura she projects by meditating for one hour. Beginning at 8th level, a divine mind can change an active aura as a standard action. At 14th level, a divine mind can change an active aura as a move action. At 18th level, a divine mind can change an active aura as a swift action.

- **Mantle:** At 1st level, a divine mind chooses a deity to follow. Once the divine mind chooses a deity, she can choose one mantle that the deity offers. A mantle includes an additional psychic aura the divine mind can project, a granted ability (which usually requires the divine mind to expend her psionic focus), and a list of psionic powers the divine mind can learn (see below). A divine mind gains a second mantle from her deity's list at 6th level and a third at 12th level.
- **Psionic Powers:** Starting at 5th level, a divine mind learns one psionic power. It must be chosen from the list for the mantle she chose at 5th level. At each level thereafter, the divine mind learns an additional power, which she must choose from the lists for the mantles she has chosen.

Also at 5th level, a divine mind gains 1 psionic power point plus 2 points from her Wild Talent feat and possibly bonus points from her Wisdom score.

Weaknesses

A divine mind's advantages come at a price. Keep the following in mind when considering a divine mind character.

- **Poor Reflex Saves:** Divine minds have the worst progression for Reflex saves (see Table 3 -- 1 in the *Player's Handbook*). Divine minds aren't so great at avoiding effects that affect whole areas. A divine mind's psychic aura can help improve her saving throws somewhat but only when she has the correct aura active.
- **Low Skill Points:** At a mere 2 skill points per level, most divine minds don't have many skill ranks even with quadruple skill points at 1st level.
- **Limited Psionic Options:** A divine mind learns no psionic powers at all until 5th level and then only a single power from the mantle she has selected. The additional mantles she gains at 6th and 12th levels expand her options somewhat, but her selection of psionic powers remains limited to what her deity allows.
In addition, a divine mind's fairly low allotment of power points limits what she can do with her psionics each day.
- **Low Mobility:** A divine mind's reliance on heavy armor makes her a slow mover on the battlefield.
- **Alignment Restriction:** Your alignment cannot have an element opposed to any element of your chosen deity's alignment (you do not need to have exactly the same alignment as your deity). For example, if you choose to follow Heironeous, a lawful good deity, your alignment cannot include chaos or evil. Furthermore, if you ever do anything that violates the tenets of your deity's alignment, you lose all your divine mind powers until you atone.

Playing a Classy Divine Mind

People who play great divine minds usually keep the following in mind.

Choose Your Deity Carefully

Your combat abilities make you a fighting character, but your mantles set you apart from mere warriors. Your choice of deity determines which mantles you can choose, so choose well. Table 1 -- 4 in *Complete Psionic* shows numerous deities and the mantles associated with them. Spend some time getting acquainted with the deities and with the list of divine mind mantles in Chapter 4. When choosing a deity, be mindful that you'll eventually learn three of your deity's mantles if you stick with the divine mind class long enough. Your actions must conform to your deity's alignment, so avoid choosing a deity whose alignment requires you to follow values and ethics you can't uphold.

Play Up Your Link with Your Deity

You're a character whose devotion to and reflections on a particular deity allow you to mentally assume some aspects of that deity's power and character. Let that effort show. You don't need to gush about how wonderful your deity is every moment of every adventure, but the effort your character puts into her powers should show at least a bit. As noted earlier, you must conform to the tenets of your deity's alignment, so you may as well adopt a few of your deity's mannerisms as well. For example, if you've chosen Kord (from the *Player's Handbook*), your character might have a competitive streak, a penchant for feats of Strength, or both. The psionic powers learned through your devotion to your deity should make emulating your deity a fairly easy task.

Pay Attention to Your Aura

At the beginning of your career, your aura is the only psychic trick you have. Until you reach 8th level, changing your aura's effect is next to impossible unless your party takes a prolonged rest break, so choose your aura carefully when beginning your the day. It's hard to go wrong with a defensive aura, but a perception aura is good when you're exploring or pulling guard duty. If you're fairly certain that you'll face an important battle, choose an attack aura. Don't forget that you can change your aura if have at least an hour to meditate.

At 8th level and beyond, you can change your aura with a standard action (or even faster as you add more divine mind levels). Don't forget this extra flexibility once you attain it.

Use Your Psionics Early and Often

Once you gain a psionic power at 5th level, look for opportunities to use it. Few divine mind psionic powers are world beaters, but taking the time to manifest a power can give you a nice edge.

Remember Your Friends

You have the hit points, Armor Class, and attack bonus to take the lead whenever your party is on the move. Until you reach upper levels in the class, you'll need to keep your allies close by to get the maximum benefit from your psychic aura. You can accomplish that by setting the pace and direction of your adventures whenever you can. When that's not possible, try to remain aware of what's going on, and place yourself near the action whenever you can.

Fighting Allies: You're no slouch in physical combat, especially when you have an attack or defense aura active or when you can use a psionic power or granted ability from a mantle to give yourself a boost. If there's a character in your group who can share the fighting chores, so much the better. When a fight starts, stay close enough together so that your fighting partner gets the benefit of your psychic aura. If you need to delay your entry into combat, warn your fighting partner ahead of time so he doesn't charge in and face the enemy alone.

Stealthy Allies: Stealthy characters such as rogues and rangers often fight and can benefit from your aura the same as more martial characters can. Be ready to help characters with the sneak attack ability by flanking their foes.

You're probably not very stealthy, but you should consider tagging behind within helping distance of scouting expeditions in case the scouts get into trouble. A perception aura can help your group notice hidden dangers.

Arcane Spellcasters: Wizards, sorcerers, and bards can pack a real punch with their spells, and they often serve as the party's heavy artillery. These characters are notoriously vulnerable to physical attacks, thanks to their poor Armor Classes and low hit points. They rely on you to keep the opposition at a distance. When a battle begins, keep yourself between your arcane allies and the foe. A defensive aura from you helps protect vulnerable characters even if you're not close enough to intervene physically.

Divine Spellcasters: Most of what applies to arcane spellcasters in your group also applies to divine spellcasters, though most divine spellcasters are a little less vulnerable and more self-sufficient than arcane spellcasters. In any case, get friendly and stay friendly with your party's cleric, druid, or paladin. Their healing spells can keep you on your feet when you take damage.

Some Key Equipment

Your psionic powers are important to you, but the proper gear is vital. Here are the basics.

- **Primary Melee Weapon:** Always carry a martial weapon. A longsword or battle axe is a good choice if you plan to use a shield (and you probably should). A greatsword or great axe is a good choice if you don't plan to use a shield (the right mix of defensive spells and perhaps the Combat Expertise feat might make up for the lack). You might want to devote a feat to an exotic weapon proficiency such as bastard sword if you wish to maximize the damage you deal while using a shield.
No matter how you plan to fight, a masterwork weapon is worth the money if you can afford it. If you plan to fight with your primary melee weapon most of the time, a magical weapon is a necessity.
- **Backup Melee Weapons:** Always have a second melee weapon available in case you lose your primary weapon or if it proves ineffective in a particular situation. Make sure this weapon deals a different kind of damage from your primary weapon. For example, if you normally use a longsword (a slashing weapon), consider a morningstar as your backup, because it deals both bludgeoning and piercing damage.

Having a light slashing weapon is a real lifesaver when a monster swallows you whole or when you must fight in a restricted space. When you're literally in the belly of a beast, it might prove hard to manifest a power.

- **Ranged Weapon:** You foes won't always oblige you by staying within melee reach, so carry a martial ranged weapon even when you've developed your melee potential. A longbow has good range and deals good damage. If you have a decent Strength score (and you probably do), get a composite longbow to benefit from your full Strength bonus on damage.
- **Armor and Shield:** A defensive aura or a defensive power such as *thicken skin* can protect you, but they're no substitute for proper armor. Buy the best armor you can afford. When you begin your career, that probably means scale mail. Move up to something heavier as soon as you can.
- **Backup Powers:** You're going to run out of power points sooner or later (probably sooner). You can project a psychic aura even without any power points, but you'll miss the ability to manifest a power. It's hard to beat a cognizance crystal for keeping a few power points in reserve.
A dorje is useful for manifesting powers that you use often, such as *touch of health*, *offensive prescience*, or *adrenaline boost*. Best of all, you can use a dorje to manifest any power on any power list for a mantle you have chosen even if you don't know the power. Because you don't know many powers, a dorje expands your psionic options considerably.

About the Author

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies and was the Sage of *Dragon Magazine* for many years. Skip is a co-designer of the **D&D** 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the *Monster Manual*. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.

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